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THE CATHOLIC LAYMAN.

Ἡ εἰς τὸν Θεὸν ἀνὰ ῥῆμα ἡ ἀγάπη, ἀγὰρ ῥιζοῦται ἀπὸ τῆς ἐκκλησίας τοῦ Θεοῦ καὶ τοῦ λαοῦ.

LUKE II. 14.

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THE GREAT WESTERN SCHISM.

IN the work on *Vulgar Errors*, which was written a couple of hundred years ago, by the learned physician, Sir Thomas Browne, we find an elaborate discussion of the question, whether it be true that a man has one rib less than a woman. He argues that though it be true that God made Eve out of one of Adam's ribs; and though it may be concluded thence that Adam had ever after one rib less than his wife, yet that it does not follow that this defect was perpetuated in his posterity; since we observe that men with one eye have children with two; cripples have children perfect in their limbs; and so on. He pursues this argument into detail, into which we need not follow him. For he also states a fact which, we should have imagined, might have saved him all further trouble—namely, that by inspection of their skeletons, it appears that men and women have each precisely the same number of ribs. In the present day we should think it a waste of time and ingenuity to expend laborious arguments on a question which might be decided by the evidence of facts. We think, however, we may derive from it a useful hint for the most profitable manner of conducting our controversies. We have already, in several articles, discussed questions as to how it is likely that God would have dealt with his church; whether, for instance, God would be likely to provide Christians with infallible safeguards against all possibility of religious error, or whether he would leave it necessary for us, in order to judge rightly in religious matters, to expend the same thought and care which we have to employ in the affairs of this life. But perhaps it may be well to turn sometimes from abstract discussion to facts. Instead of debating what course of dealings with his church, Scripture and reason make it likely that God would pursue, it may be well occasionally to examine how God actually has dealt with it. For this purpose we intend to give, now and then, sketches from Ecclesiastical History, which will serve to test the correctness of our other arguments. We do not intend, however, to go into minute points, which have been the subjects of dispute between Roman Catholics and Protestants, but mean to confine ourselves to the great facts which are admitted by historians of all persuasions. And the better to secure our impartiality, we shall be careful to state nothing for which we have not the authority of Roman Catholic historians.

In the article on the jubilee, which appeared in our October number, we had occasion to mention incidentally, that there were, at the time of the third jubilee, two rival Popes claiming the allegiance of the Christian world. It may interest some of our readers, then, if we tell something about the origin of this state of things, and how it was terminated; or, in other words, if we give a short sketch of the history of that long-continued division among Christians known by the name of "the Great Western Schism." To tell the story in all its details would require a large volume; but the chief facts may be briefly summed up. For fifty years two or more Popes disputed with each other the honour of being the rightful successor of St. Peter; and the claims of the contending parties were so evenly balanced that the

nations of Christendom were tolerably equally divided between them: very respectable Roman Catholic writers maintain that it is still impossible to decide with certainty which party was in the right: Saints working miracles are said, by Romanists, to have been numbered among the adherents of either Pontiff: and, finally (we quote from the Jesuit Maimbourg), even a general council, which had the aid of the Holy Ghost to enable them to decide infallibly which was in the right, was unable to solve the question, and was obliged to have recourse to its authority, instead of availing itself of its knowledge. For the Council of Constance did not venture to decide which of the rival Popes was the true one; but by virtue of its authority deposed them all, and elected a new Pope of its own.

The commencement of the great schism dates from the year 1378, from the death of Pope Gregory XI. For seventy years before that time the papal chair had been occupied by a succession of French Popes, who, to the great dissatisfaction of the people of Rome, had removed their residence from that city to Avignon, in France. And as the French Popes had for the most part nominated French cardinals (with whom lay the election of the new Pope), it seemed likely that this state of things would continue. But it had so happened that, a little before his death, Pope Gregory had been induced to remove to Rome, chiefly by the persuasion of Catharine of Sienna, who has been since canonized as a saint, and who is remarkable as having had (according to her own account, at least) the marks of the Saviour's wounds imprinted on her body, although, to spare her modesty, no eyes but her own were ever able to see them. The Pope did not long survive his removal to Rome; and on his death-bed, having a presentiment of the evils which were to ensue, he called his friends together, and solemnly cautioned them to beware of men or women; who, under the appearance of religion, spoke visions of their own devising, since that he himself, seduced by such visions, had been led to reject the rational counsel of his friends, and had drawn the church into imminent danger of a schism.

Sixteen cardinals (of whom but four were Italians) entered the conclave, to proceed to the election of Gregory's successor. Previously, however, the chief magistrates of Rome had presented them with a remonstrance, pointing out to them the miseries which Rome had suffered from the absence of its spiritual head. "The sacred edifices were left without roof, or gates, or walls; the abode of beasts, which cropped the grass off their very altars. The faithful were no longer attracted to Rome, either by devotion or by interest; so that there was danger lest the unfortunate city should be reduced to a vast and frightful solitude." As the only remedy for these evils they demanded the election of a Roman, or, at least, an Italian Pope, adding some threats as to the extremities to which the people might proceed, if disappointed in their just expectation.

The cardinals received still plainer hints, to the same effect, after they had actually entered on their deliberations. Their place of meeting was surrounded by a tumultuous mob, which at length burst even into the recesses of the conclave. They threatened the cardinals with personal violence if they ventured to elect a foreign Pope—they would set fire to the place—they would tear them in pieces—they "would make their heads redder than their hats;" and they kept up a constant cry, "We must have a Roman for a Pope, or, at the very least, an Italian." At first the cardinals answered boldly, that their choice must be directed by the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and not by popular menaces; and that if they made an election constrained by violence, the Pope so chosen would not be a real Pope, but an intruder. At length, however, they gave way, and elected an Italian, who took the name of Urban VI. The cardinals at first seemed well content with what they had done, and sent round to the different states of Europe the customary notification of the choice which they had made. Perhaps, had the new Pope given no cause of complaint, they might have continued to acquiesce in the election which had been forced upon them. But Urban VI. had scarcely been seated on his throne, when he began to inveigh bitterly against the vices of the prelates, their simony, their

injustice, their exactions, and their scandalous luxury. In a short time he had made himself so unpopular that the cardinals determined to take advantage of the violence which had attended his election, in order to declare him unlawfully chosen. When, therefore, the summer heats gave them a good excuse for withdrawing from Rome, they retired to Anagni, and there commenced their proceedings against Urban. They began by putting forth a public declaration, describing the tumults which had taken place at the election of Urban; stating that they had only chosen him in the persuasion that, seeing the circumstances under which he was elected, he would in conscience have refused the Pontificate. But that, on the contrary, forgetful of his salvation, and burning with ambition, he had assented to the choice; that under the effect of the same intimidation he had been enthroned and crowned, and assumed the name of Pope, though he rather merited that of apostate and Antichrist. They then anathematized him as a usurper, and invoked against him all aids and succours, divine and human.

Before proceeding, however, to the election of a new Pope, the cardinals thought it desirable to obtain the co-operation of the Italians, who, as we mentioned before, were members of the Sacred College. But how were they to be got to join in opposition to their countrymen? The cardinals hit on an ingenious method. They separately gave to each of them a secret promise, in writing, that he himself should be the object of their new choice! The device was successful. The Italian cardinals kept their secret from each other, and repaired to meet their brethren, each confident that he was to be elected Pope. But they had no sooner entered into conclave than they discovered that they had been all alike imposed on, for a Frenchman was immediately chosen; who assumed the title of Clement VII.

We pause here in our narrative for the present. Next month we intend to go on to tell how Christians were perplexed between the claims of the rival Popes, and how the whole of Europe was divided in their allegiance between them; how the two Popes excommunicated each other and his adherents; and yet how these anathemas are stated, by respectable Romish writers, to have done no harm to anybody, and how saints flourished and worked miracles in the ranks of both parties; how the schism lasted for a period of about fifty years, and how it was eventually composed.

We shall conclude, for the present, with one practical inference from the whole story. Romanists bring forward specious arguments to prove that it is necessary that there should be, at all times, in the church a living and speaking judge of controversies; and they contend that if there were not, Christ's promise to be ever with his church would have failed. But now, whatever interpretation theory may put on the promises of our Lord, the facts we have brought before you, show that the Romish interpretation cannot be the true one; for the great schism lasted longer than the period ordinarily assigned for a "generation" of men. A young man, who had barely arrived at maturity at the death of Gregory XI., might have died at a respectable old age before the schism was finally healed. And such a man, during the whole course of his life, must have been uncertain where to seek for an infallible guide in controversies. There were at that time two who pretended to be the successors of St. Peter, and the most important religious advice given by them was, that each of them assured him that by acknowledging his rival he should be excluded from the pale of the church, outside of which there is no salvation. And in this advice respectable Roman Catholic authorities are of opinion that both the Popes were wrong.

Well, then, what we say is this: It is no use to a man to know that there is somewhere or other one able to guide him infallibly right, if he cannot tell who that infallible guide is. And it is poor comfort to him to be told that the church had an infallible guide in former ages, and that it will have one in future ages, if there be no guide to be found while he is alive. If, then, God could leave his church, for thirty years or fifty, without a head, or uncertain who that head was, he might just as well leave it in the same state for 300 years or 500: and whatever is meant by the promise,

that the gates of hell shall not prevail against the church, we may be sure of this, that it does not mean that the church shall always have a visible head, whose religious teaching may be implicitly followed.

THE WRITTEN WORD.

THERE is reason to believe that neither Protestants nor Roman Catholics are fully aware of the strong grounds that exist for considering the written Word of God to be the appointed depository of his revelation to man. It may, therefore, be profitable to both to set before them some of the many authorities in favour of an appeal to the written Word of God, and to nothing else, as containing all God's revealed Word, both as to faith and practice.

We shall begin by taking a view of the various ways in which God has revealed himself at different times.

It was to be expected that when God made man in his own image—made him a reasoning, intelligent, responsible being—he would not leave him without intimations of his will, but would reveal himself in such ways as should seem best to his infinite wisdom.

At first God spoke plainly, audibly, directly to his creatures. Thus he spoke to Adam in the garden, both before and after the fall. Thus he spoke to Cain, to Noah, to Abraham, to Isaac, to Jacob. They were left in no doubt that God spoke to them, and that what they heard was the word of God.

Thus he spoke to Moses at the burning bush, in the land of Egypt. In all the revelations of his will, with regard to the deliverance of his people, he spoke to him face to face; so that Moses could say—"The Lord has appeared and spoken to me, and I speak in his name."

In the same way God spoke directly to both Moses and to the people in the wilderness. He, with his own voice, in the hearing of the people, spoke the Ten commandments at Mount Sinai.

The people, we read, were so overpowered by this terrible exhibition of God's glory that they prayed that he might not speak to them directly, but through his servant Moses (Ex. xx. 19)—"They said to Moses, Speak thou with us and we will hear; but let not God speak with us, lest we die."

The Lord then took Moses into the mount, and revealed to him the law and the statutes which he was to make known to the people. And at this time our God gave an intimation of the way in which, in future times, he proposed to make his creatures acquainted with his unchanging mind and will, and to have it ever preserved and kept before them. He bore his testimony to the use of having his will—what he decreed to his people—committed to writing, that it might be as permanently fixed and secured, for their instruction, as it was permanently fixed in his own mind. As Moses tells us (Deut. ix. 10)—"And the Lord delivered unto us two tables of stone, written with the finger of God, and on them was written according to all the word which the Lord spoke with you in the mount, out of the midst of the fire, in the day of assembly."

What a testimony is here had, from God himself, as to the value of having that committed to writing which it is his will, and for the good of man, to have preserved and kept in memory. If ever there were words likely to be remembered, and treasured up in men's minds, they were the Ten Commandments. The circumstances of their delivery, the solemn awfulness of the occasion, the Divine person who spoke them, their shortness, and yet their importance, all conspired to have permanently fixed them in the memory. Yet, the God who spoke them wrote them with his own finger on two tables of stone, and, in consequence, the Church has them, not as they might have been remembered, and handed down by tradition, but as our God delivered them.

After God, according to the desire of the people, had ceased to speak directly to them the other statutes and judgments, but had given them to Moses, who was to make them known to them, the Lord said unto Moses (Ex. xxxiv. 27)—"Write thou these words: for after the tenor of these words I have made a covenant with thee and with Israel."

Thus was written, by God's express direction, what is often referred to as the "Book of the Law of the Lord." And it is to be remarked, that now was the first case in which an opportunity was given for instruction by tradition—i.e., God speaking to one, and that person delivering what he had heard to another. If any one might have been depended upon for accurately remembering and faithfully delivering what had been said to him, it would have been Moses. But it was not God's intention to have his law to be transmitted by tradition from one person to another—from one generation to another. He had his law written for their learning, and for its safe and continued preservation as he had originally delivered it. And this book of the law was to be used as the storehouse and depository of God's revelation. So we read (Ex. xxiv. 3, &c.)—"Moses came and told the people all the words of the Lord, and all the judgments, &c.; and Moses wrote all the words of the Lord." And having offered sacrifice "he took the book of the covenant, and read in the audience of the people, and they said, All that the Lord hath said we will do, and be obedient."—Verse 7.

This reading of the written law was not to be done this once and no more. We read (in Deut. xxxi. 7, &c.)—"Moses called unto Joshua, and gave him a charge; and Moses wrote this law, and delivered it unto the priests, the sons of Levi, which bare the ark of the covenant of the Lord, and unto all the elders of Israel. And Moses commanded them, saying, At the end of every seven years, in the solemnity of the year of release, in the feast of tabernacles, when all Israel is come to appear before the Lord thy God in the place which he shall choose, thou shalt read this law before all Israel in their hearing. Gather the people together, men, and women, and children, and thy stranger that is within thy gates, that they may hear, and that they may learn and fear the Lord your God, and observe to do all the words of this law: and that their children, which have not known anything, may hear and learn to fear the Lord your God as long as ye live in the land, whither ye go over Jordan to possess it."

The history informs us that Joshua obeyed the directions given by Moses (Jos. viii. 30, &c.)—"Then Joshua built an altar unto the Lord God of Israel in Mount Ebal, as Moses, the servant of the Lord, commanded the children of Israel, as it is written in the book of the law of Moses, &c. And he wrote there upon the stones a copy of the law of Moses, which he wrote in the presence of the children of Israel. And all Israel, and their elders, and officers, and their judges stood on this side of the ark and on that side, &c. And afterward he read all the words of the law, the blessings and the cursings, according to all that is written in the book of the law. There was not a word of all that Moses commanded which Joshua read not before all the congregation of Israel, with the women and the little ones, and the strangers that were conversant among them."

Hence it is abundantly evident that, at the setting up of the Jewish dispensation, the written Word was the depository of God's revelation. It, and it alone, contained all that the people were to believe and to do. It will be found that there is equally conclusive evidence that it continued to be so to the end of that dispensation. Moses, looking forward to the time when the people would desire to have a king set over them, gives this direction (Deut. xvii. 18)—"And it shall be, when he shall sit upon the throne of his kingdom, that he shall write him a copy of this law in a book, out of that which is before the priests, the Levites. And it shall be with him, and he shall read therein all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God, to keep all the words of this law and these statutes, to do them," &c. We find King David thus charging his son Solomon (1 Kings ii. 3)—"Keep the charge of the Lord thy God, to walk in his ways, to keep his statutes, and his commandments, and his judgments, and his testimonies, as it is written in the law of Moses, that thou mayest prosper in all that thou doest, and whithersoever thou turnest thyself."

Had the kings of Israel and Judah continued to be guided by what was written in the law of Moses, the state of the nation would have been very different from that which appears in their history; but the book of the law was not consulted—it was kept out of sight; at length it was lost, until, by God's help, it was found in the time of Josiah (2 Kings xxii. 11)—"And when Shaphan the scribe read it before the king, he rent his clothes, and said, Great is the wrath of the Lord that is kindled against us, because our fathers have not hearkened unto the words of this book, to do according to all that is written concerning us." This book was acknowledged to be the rule by which they ought to have been guided.

Looking farther into their history, the captivity will be seen to have been brought as the judgment of God upon the people, for having transgressed the law which he gave them; and when, in his undeserved mercy, they were brought back to their land, they will be found acknowledging the written law to be the rule to which they should refer. We read (Neh. viii.)—"And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water-gate, and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel; and Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation, both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month; and he read therein before the street that was before the water-gate, from the morning until mid-day, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law; and Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; so they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the meaning." No one can read the history of the children of Israel and not see that, without doubt, under the Jewish dispensation, even though there was a hierarchy especially appointed of God, his written Word was still his ordained storehouse of truth, to be appealed to and received both by priests and people, and the appointed guide by adhering to which his people were to be kept in the right way, both of practice and faith. As the Apostle James said (Acts xv. 21)—"For Moses of

old time hath in every city them that preach him, being read in the synagogues every Sabbath-day."

The question, then, presents itself—Was a change introduced when our Lord brought in his gracious dispensation?

The first word we hear from the lips of our Lord, when entering on his ministry, was (Mat. iv. 4), "*It is written*," giving his sanction to the authority of the written Word. One of the first acts we hear recorded of him was to go into the synagogue on the Sabbath-day, and to stand up to read (Luke iv. 17)—"And there was delivered unto him the book of the Prophet Isaiah; and when he had opened the book, he found the place where it was written, 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me,' &c.; and he began to say unto them, 'This day is this Scripture fulfilled in your ears.'" Again (Luke x. 26)—"A certain lawyer stood up and tempted him, saying, Master, what shall I do to inherit eternal life? He said unto him, What is written in the law? how readest thou?" Luke xvi. 29—"Abraham said unto him, They have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them; and he said, Nay, Father Abraham, but if one went unto them from the dead they will repent; and he said unto them, If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded though one rose from the dead." John v. 39, &c.—"We have our Lord saying to the unbelieving Jews, 'Search the Scriptures, for in them ye think ye have eternal life, and they are they which testify of me; for had ye believed Moses, ye would have believed me, for he wrote of me; but if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?' Mark vii. 5, &c.—"The Pharisees and Scribes asked him, Why walk not thy disciples according to the tradition of the elders, but eat bread with unwashed hands? He answered and said unto them, Well hath Isaiah prophesied of you hypocrites, as it is written, This people honoureth me with their lips, but their heart is far from me; howbeit in vain do they worship me, teaching for doctrines the commandments of men"—"making the Word of God of none effect through your tradition, which ye have delivered." Our Lord uniformly pointed out the error of those who thought to serve God according to the tradition or commandments of men, whilst he gave the whole sanction of his authority to God's Word preserved in writing, saying, "What is written?"

It may be well to notice one text, the only one that sounds as if by it our Lord gave his authority to another depository of truth besides the Scriptures (and which is often quoted for that purpose), when he condemned the man who should refuse to hear the Church—Mat. xviii. 17. If that text is examined it will appear that the matter to be referred to the Church was not a matter of God's revelation, either as to faith or practice, but a matter in dispute between man and man—"If thy brother shall trespass against thee, go and tell him his fault between thee and him alone. If he shall hear thee thou hast gained thy brother; but if he will not hear thee, then take with thee one or two more, that in the mouth of two or three witnesses every word may be established. And if he shall neglect to hear them tell it to the Church: but if he neglect to hear the Church let him be unto thee as a heathen man and a publican." The Church (whoever may be intended by that title) is to be the umpire to decide a matter in dispute between brethren. This is consistent with what St. Paul says (1 Cor. vi. 2)—"If the world shall be judged by you, are ye unworthy to judge the smallest matters? Know ye not that we shall judge angels? how much more things that pertain to this life?" There is not a text that can be quoted in which our Lord sends the inquirer after God's revealed mind and will to any company of living men for information—in which he says to him who asks, "What shall I do to inherit eternal life? what shall I do to be saved?" "Hear the Church," but he has said, "Search the Scriptures"—"they have Moses and the prophets, let them hear them."

Nor were things altered when the Lord had ascended into the heavens, having first desired his disciples to "go and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things which he had commanded them, and promising to be with them always to the end of the world."

The Apostle John, at the end of his Gospel, says—"Many other signs truly did Jesus in the presence of his disciples, which are not written in this book; but these are written that ye might believe that Jesus is the Christ, and that believing ye might have life through his name." The Apostle Paul says that he was not taught by man, but by the Lord Jesus Christ. He, then, if any man might appeal solely to his own inspiration and expect everything he said to be received upon his authority, yet he is found always magnifying the Scriptures. When making his defence before Felix (Acts xxiv. 14) he says—"I worship the God of my fathers, believing all things that are written in the law and in the prophets." And before Festus and King Agrippa (Chap. xxvi. 22)—"I continue unto this day witnessing both to small and great, saying none other things than those which the prophets and Moses did say should come." In Rom. iv., when he would prove the doctrine of justification by faith, he says—"What saith the Scripture?" Rom. xv. 4—"Whatsoever things were written